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Senate

The Senate met at 2 p.m. and was called to order by the Honorable JIM WEBB, a Senator from the Commonwealth of Virginia.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Eternal God, source of all goodness, teach us how to master ourselves that we may serve others. May this self mastery inspire our lawmakers to serve others by joining You in bringing deliverance to those in captivity because of life's painful circumstances. Support our Senators with Your strength, as You guide them with Your wisdom. May Your peace that surpasses all human understanding be with us all our days. Lord, unite our lawmakers in the common cause of justice, righteousness, and truth.

We pray in Your merciful Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable JIM WEBB led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. INOUE).

The legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, October 11, 2011.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable JIM WEBB, a Senator

from the Commonwealth of Virginia, to perform the duties of the Chair.

DANIEL K. INOUE,
President pro tempore.

Mr. WEBB thereupon assumed the chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

SCHEDULE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, following leader remarks, the Senate will be in morning business until 5:30 this evening. At 5:30 p.m., there will be three rollcall votes. The first vote will be on confirmation of the Triche-Milazzo nomination. That is a vote for a judge. We appreciate the cooperation we have gotten on that. The second vote will be on passage of S. 1619, the China currency legislation. The third vote will be on the cloture motion on the motion to proceed to S. 1660, the American Jobs Act.

Mr. CORKER addressed the Chair.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Tennessee.

Mr. CORKER. I wonder if the—

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is still recognized.

Mr. REID. I have the floor. Does the Senator have a question?

Mr. CORKER. I would like to ask a question, if I could.

Mr. REID. I would be happy to yield to my friend for a question.

Mr. CORKER. Mr. President, it is my understanding that—first of all, I think most people in this body know it has been 995 days, and the free-trade agreements are just now coming to the floor. I had a very good conversation today with the majority leader, and I thank him so much for his courtesy. But it is my understanding, for all those who

want to see the free-trade agreements ratified prior to the time the South Korea President comes on Thursday to make his joint address—for all those who want to see that passed and in hand in advance of that—if we were to get on the jobs bill, as I understand it, we would have to stay on the jobs bill for 30 hours. So by getting on the jobs bill, it would actually preclude us from being able to successfully pass those free-trade agreements in the time that all of us would like.

I would like for that to be verified by the leader, if that is possible.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, around here we can do anything by unanimous consent. The work the Republican leader and I went through—perhaps a little easier on his side than mine—to get the trade bills in the position they are in was fairly difficult, and it would take unanimous consent to get off a particular piece of legislation we are on to move forward on the trade bills. That is my understanding. As I have indicated, we are looking forward to the votes this evening, and I will be happy to be as cooperative as I can with everyone involved. But in direct response to my friend's question, I think it is pretty clear it would take unanimous consent to do that.

Mr. CORKER. Mr. President, my understanding is that unanimous consent would be very unlikely considering the fact there are a number of folks who actually do not want to see these trade agreements pass. The evidence is, if we were to get on the jobs bill—and I thank the leader for talking with me about this—it is very unlikely the free-trade agreements will pass in the time all of us would like to see prior to the President of South Korea being here.

I yield the floor and thank the majority leader for letting me have this dialog and for having the dialog we had on Thursday evening.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I say through the Chair to my friend, I was happy to have that dialog. As we have

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indicated, if at some time we get on a jobs bill, we will have—as I have indicated, I appreciate the comments of a number of people in the press today. Specifically, I direct myself to Mr. JOHN CORNYN, the junior Senator from Texas. He and I have not always seen the same picture on legislative matters, but I thought his statements in the press were very constructive. He, in effect, said he would hope we could get on legislation and work on it the way we used to and that would be to have some agreement on how we move forward with amendments. The Republican leader and I are trying to do that.

UPCOMING VOTES

Mr. REID. Mr. President, this evening, the Senate will vote on legislation to end the unfair practice of currency manipulation by the Chinese Government. It is pretty clear by now that China undervalues its currency to give its own exports an unwarranted advantage in the global marketplace. This costs American jobs—lots of them. It costs lots of jobs by unjustly tilting the playing field against American manufacturers.

America's trade deficit with China has ballooned from \$10 billion in 1990 to \$273 billion today. It has cost 3 million American jobs already. Two million of those lost jobs came from the manufacturing sector.

American businesses do not need special advantages to compete. They just need an even playing field.

Tonight we have the opportunity to stop China from continuing to cheat American workers, pump \$300 billion into our economy, and support 1.6 million Americans jobs.

This legislation has twice advanced in this Chamber with bipartisan supermajorities. Thirty-one Republicans voted to move this legislation to the Senate floor early last week. I urge each of them to stand firm in their support for this job-creating legislation—to stand with American workers rather than siding with China. I remind my Republican colleagues that those who revoke support of this important measure for the sake of partisan politics must answer, first of all, as we all do, to our constituents.

Today, the Senate will vote to proceed to the American Jobs Act, President Obama's plan to put Americans to work without adding a penny to the deficit. This legislation will also ask the richest Americans to contribute their fair share to get our economy back on track.

The President's plan will put construction crews back to work building the things that make our country stronger—roads, bridges, dams, sewers, water systems, and up-to-date schools where our children can get the best education possible.

There are schools in our country that are not wired for the Internet. The average school in America is a little more than 50 years old. Technology has

changed a lot since those schools were constructed, but, sadly, our schools have not. This work is essential, and Americans are desperate for jobs it will create.

The American Jobs Act would also extend unemployment insurance for Americans who are still struggling to find work. Economists agree this boosts the economy because the long-term unemployed spend the money immediately on groceries, gas, and rent.

This legislation would cut taxes for middle-class families and businesses—something Republicans have long supported. The President's plan contains many ideas that Republicans have supported consistently over the years, especially when their party controlled Congress or the White House or both. Republicans oppose those ideas now, I guess, because they have a proven track record of creating jobs—all these programs—but I guess Republicans think if the economy improves, it might help President Obama. So they root for the economy to fail and oppose every effort to improve it, and they resist anything the President proposes, no matter its common sense, including this jobs plan to create 2 million jobs, containing many of the issues the Republicans have supported many times.

Americans have demanded Congress pass legislation to create jobs—and pass it now. Americans support our plan to fund job creation by asking people who make more than \$1 million a year to contribute their fair share by a margin of 3 to 1. That is 75 percent. Mainstream Americans agree we cannot ask seniors and the middle class to go on shouldering the heaviest burden.

Today we will see whether Republicans have gotten the message or if they still put the wants of millionaires and billionaires ahead of the needs of seniors and middle-class families. The American people demand that the Republicans finally admit that putting America back to work will require shared sacrifice—especially from those who can best afford to be part of the solution.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Republican leader is recognized.

JOBS VOTE

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, a little later today, the Senate will vote on President Obama's second attempt

to address our Nation's ongoing jobs crisis with a stimulus bill, and Republicans actually welcome the opportunity. If voting against another stimulus is the only way we can get Democrats in Washington to finally abandon this failed approach to job creation, then so be it.

The President has been calling for this vote for weeks, and, in my view, we cannot have it soon enough. In fact, on the previous bill, I kept trying to get a vote on the President's first version of the stimulus bill. We will be voting on the second sort of modified version of the stimulus bill this afternoon. This is a vote Republicans are anxious to have.

For nearly 5 years, Democrats have controlled the Senate. For the last 3 of those years, they have also controlled the White House. By proposing a second stimulus, Democrats are showing the American people they have no new ideas for dealing with our jobs crisis.

Today's vote is conclusive proof that Democrats' sole proposal is to keep doing what has not worked—along with a massive tax hike we know will not create jobs. So it is hard to overstate the importance of this vote.

The President's first stimulus was a legislative and economic catastrophe. Nearly 3 years after passage, we are still learning about its failures and its abuses. We knew it was a bailout for States. We knew all about the absurd projects it funded. Over the past few weeks, we have also learned that the Obama administration was doing the very thing with solar companies that it once rightly criticized many others for doing on Wall Street: gambling with other people's money; the Federal Government playing venture capitalist with our tax money.

But there is only one thing we need to know about the first stimulus to oppose the second one and it is this: \$825 billion later, there are 1.7 million fewer jobs in this country than there were when the first stimulus was signed. That is the clearest proof it was a monstrous failure, and it is the surest proof we have that those who support the second stimulus are not doing so to create jobs.

As I see it, that is what today's vote boils down to. Everyone who votes for this second stimulus will have to answer a simple but important question: Why on Earth would we support an approach that we already know will not work?

Of course, the truth is most Democrats know just as well as I do that passing another stimulus and tax hike is a lousy idea, which is why the Democrats are having such a hard time convincing their colleagues to vote for it.

Here is what they have decided to do instead. Democrats have designed this bill to fail—they have designed their own bill to fail—in the hopes that anyone who votes against it will look bad for opposing a bill they mistakenly refer to as a "jobs bill."

That is not just my interpretation. The senior Senator from New York has